Traci's 16th List of Ten: Ten Reading Comprehension Activities   
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1. [MAIN POINT] The text that we've read for today is teaching a lesson. The events that occur, the interaction between the characters, and the movement of the plot from beginning to end are the author's way of making a point. What is the author's lesson? What is the author trying to teach readers? After you've decided on the lesson of the text, support your conclusion. How do the events in the text come together to teach the lesson? (If it helps, think about the reading as a fable -- what is the moral?)
2. [STEPS] Read the text that we're considering as if it were a set of instructions. What are the instructions telling readers how to do? What are the steps to completing the tasks? For your paper, translate the text into step-by-step instructions. Remember to number the steps in the process, to use active, imperative verbs, and to appeal to your audience by using words like "you" and "your."
3. [FACT vs. OPINION] Choose any paragraph from the text that we're reading and find three facts and three opinions. Try to find a paragraph with at least 25 to 50 words (or choose two or three shorter paragraphs). Once you've found your facts and opinions, write a paragraph that explains how you can tell the difference. How can you tell the material that is fact from the material that is an opinion? Are there words and phrases that tip you off? Are the details of what is said important? If you were trying to tell a classmate the difference between fact and opinion, what would you say? How could you use the three facts and opinions that you've found to illustrate your point?
4. [PERSPECTIVE] Choose a passage from the text that we've read and rewrite it from a different perspective. First, cast the events from another character's point of view. Determine whose point of view the passage relies on; then, choose another character who knows about the events that are described in the passage. How does the character's point of view affect the things that you see? Consider how another character's perspective changes the scene.
5. [PREDICTION] Consider the last section of the text that we've read. Based on everything that's happened so far and the behavior of the characters in the story, what will happen next? Sketch out the events that will occur -- what will the characters do? what will they say to one another? how will their actions affect the plot of the story or the author's main point? In addition to outlining the things that will happen next, support your predictions by explaining the details and actions in the text that support your conclusions. What about the characters or their actions make your prediction seem accurate? The point of this assignment is not to guess the next events correctly, but to show that you can make a logical prediction based on the facts at hand.
6. [PARAPHRASE & SUMMARY] Choose a passage of about 75 to 100 words, several nice paragraphs. Begin by writing a paraphrase of the paragraphs. Explain all the points of the passage in your own words, but stick to the facts and the order of the original. Don't insert your own opinions or ideas. Your paraphrase will be several sentences long. After you've written a paraphrase, write a one-sentence summary of the passage -- You should have one sentence of about 10 to 15 words that captures the gist of the paragraphs that you've chosen from the text. Begin by sketching out the key points or facts from the paragraphs; then, bring those ideas into a single sentence. You may have to condense or combine related ideas to reduce your notes to a single sentence.
7. [CREATIVE RESPONSE] What if today's reading were a myth or folk legend? How would it be different? Who would be the "mere mortals," and who would be the gods or the human with super abilities? Is there an important hero? Is there a test or some trickery involved? Does the tale explain the way that something was created or how something got to be the way that it is? Once you've thought through your reading, rewrite it as a myth. Be creative, and explore the ideas. If the text seems too long to write as one myth, choose one particular episode that occurs and rewrite only that episode as a myth.
8. [JOURNALIST'S QUESTIONS] Who wrote the text that you've read for today? What do you know about the author (why is the author qualified to write this text)? Why did the author write this text (what point is the author trying to make)? Where was the text published first (what can you tell about the text by the where it was published)? When was the text written? After you've answered all the journalist's questions, what conclusions can you make about the text? How might the text be biased? How would it be different if it were written in another time or published in another place?
9. [PRE-READING & POST-READING] Before you begin reading today's assignment, take a few minutes to write down everything that you know about the subject. What have you heard others say about it? Have you read other things that talk about the same topic? Have you seen television programs or movies about the ideas that the reading covers (or heard radio broadcasts)? Next, take several minutes write down what you would like to know about the subject. What questions do you have about the ideas or subject that are covered? If you could know only one more thing about the issue, what one thing would that be and why? After you've done your pre-reading notes on what you know and what you want to know, go ahead and read the text. Once you've finished, return to your notes and write a paragraph or so on what you've learned from the reading. You might think about how the reading compared to what you already knew about the topic. Were any of the ideas that were included surprising or shocking? Were they thing that you really knew already? Was there any new information that you hadn't heard or seen before? You might think about the ways that the text related to other things that you've read, seen, or heard about the topic -- how different was the writer's perspective? Finally, did the text answer any of the question that you had about the subject? Did you learn any of the things that you wanted to?
10. [TITLE] Look closely at the title of the text that you've read for today. If you're looking at a novel, you might consider the title of the novel or the title of a specific chapter. An author uses a title to catch your attention and to forecast the main ideas of the text. How does the title relate to the text? Before you read the text, what did the title lead you to expect? After you read the text, did your way of thinking about the title change? If so, how? If you were given the chance to change the title of the text, would you -- and if you would, what would you change it to?